

Vital St. Gemme Beauvais II House  
St. Mary's Road (Hwy 61)  
Ste. Genevieve  
Ste. Genevieve Co., MO

HABS No. MO-1284

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36 -

PHOTOGRAPHS

ADDENDUM  
FOLLOWS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

Addendum to  
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REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, DC 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
VITAL ST. GEMME BEAUVAIS HOUSE II

HABS  
MO,  
97-3A16  
36-

Location: Highway 61 (St. Mary's Road), Ste. Genevieve, Ste. Genevieve County, Missouri, 63670.

Present Owner: Harry Gegg

Present Occupant: Gegg Construction Co.

Present Use: Office

Significance: This large stone house with trussed timber roof has been preserved without alterations to its impressive construction. Stone houses were unusual in Ste. Genevieve, but were built more often in St. Louis, colonial Kaskaskia, and Cahokia. The roof structure of this house is characteristic of large, well built creole houses in Ste. Genevieve, a National Historic Landmark Historic District. The roof structure is the only intact example in Ste. Genevieve in which the longitudinal braces take the form of the cross of St. Andrew, a form which was common in Quebec during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of Erection: c. 1799. The property was acquired by Vital St. Gemme Beauvais, nephew of the builder of the house at 20 S. Main Street, and his wife Therese Pratte in April 1799 shortly after their marriage in 1798. According to tree-ring analysis, timbers were harvested for the building in c. 1799. In addition, the structural members of the roof are both mill sawn and hand hewn.
2. Original and subsequent owners: Legal description: Lot situated au moulin des cotes around 3 arpents, bordered on the south side of the river of the said mill and au ruisseaux that discharges in the said river, on the north and (east?) to the chemin du roy, and on the west to the chemin du moulin.  
Chain of title:
  - a. April 15, 1799, deed from Jean Marie Legrand to Vital Ste. Gemme Beauvais. Land records 205.
  - b. April 19, 1838, Lot in Ste. Genevieve, 1 1/2 arpents by 1 1/2 arpents bounded northeast by New Bourbon St., southeast by lot #66, southwest by Francois Valles claim, northwest by lot #64 on which stands good stone house and other buildings sold by Eloy Lecompte (administrator) of Marie

Therese Ste. Gemme, deceased, to John Ferdinand Kluck for \$370.00. Deed book E, page 103.

- c. May 21, 1844, division of the property by heirs/legal representatives of John F. Kluck, deceased, sold at public auction to Peter Moreau for \$111.00. (Deed May 23, 1845?-which date is entered?) Deed? book F, page 281.  
NEED INFORMATION AFTER 1844

3. Original plans and construction: The original form and construction of the house survives within the later additions.
4. Alterations and additions: The house has experienced minimal changes, including the addition of a southwest and southeast room, both framed and sided with clapboards, and the addition of built in closets. A modern porch is partially constructed of concrete blocks. An upper story was created in the attic space through the addition of a large dormer window across the front of the house.

B. Historical Context:

Ste. Genevieve was one of the most important French colonial settlements in the mid-Mississippi valley, and the one that best preserves the architecture of that period. The Vital St. Gemme Beauvais House II house is unusual because it is constructed of stone. Stone houses were typical of St. Louis, but no French buildings survive there.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: A large stone house on stone foundation, the house presents a unique variation on the trussed roof structure typical of the French creole tradition that can be observed in Ste. Genevieve. Its size, roof structure, steeply pitched gable roof, and squarish plan illustrate the building's kinship with many stone houses built in Quebec in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century.
2. Condition of fabric: fair

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: One and one half story on elevated cellar with high attic, 33'-1 1/2" across the front by 46'-8 1/2" deep.
2. Foundations: Random cut stone, 20" thick, support

house, concrete block provide foundation for front gallery.

3. Walls: Stone, 18" thick on first story.
4. Structural system, framing: Masonry structure, timber roof of several king-post trusses with longitudinal wind braces.
5. Porches: Gallery at front and rear of house, porch posts of wood. Secondary rafters extend over the gallery giving the characteristic double pitch to the roof.
6. Chimneys: The chimney on the east side of the house is stone and carries two fireplaces. Two brick chimneys were later additions.
7. Openings: Steps lead up to the principal double door entrance at the front (north) of the house. Another main entrance with a later door is at the back of the house. Secondary entrances have been added when two room were joined to the existing structure. A separate entrance under the front gallery leads into the cellar.
  - a. Doorways and doors: Double doors, apparently original, at front entrance.
  - b. Windows and shutters: Double hung windows, three lights over one, and six over six type, no shutters.
8. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: Metal covering over earlier wood shingles.
  - b. Cornice, eaves: Slight eave projection over porch, greater eave projection on upper story addition.
  - c. Dormers: A wide dormer window protrudes at the upper story.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:
  - a. First floor: Squarish plan with four rooms and added rectangular rooms in the southeast and southwest corners. Two rooms 18' deep are at the front of the house and two smaller rooms are at the rear.

- b. Cellar: Unfinished cellar space of stone block walls.
- c. Attic: Second floor finished in original open attic space.
- 2. Stairways: Central stairway is in original location.
- 3. Flooring: 10" wide floorboards.
- 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster walls.
- 5. Openings: Earliest doorways and doors of walnut with thin panelled doors. Some are the six and four type panel designs. Closet doors in central living area have arched panel designs.
- 6. Mechanical equipment: Original heating by fireplace; modern heating, lighting, and plumbing have been added.

D. Site:

General setting and orientation: The house faces northeast on U.S. Highway 61 (St. Mary's Road) on a large level lot. The lot today is filled with heavy construction equipment.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Bibliography:

- 1. Primary and unpublished sources: Deed records in the Ste. Genevieve County Clerk's Office, County Courthouse. Other records in the Ste. Genevieve Archives (SGA), collected on microfilm, Western Historical Manuscripts Collection, University of Missouri-Columbia.
- 2. Secondary and published sources:
  - Ekberg, Carl J., Colonial Ste. Genevieve, An Adventure on the Mississippi Frontier (Gerald, Missouri: The Patrice Press, 1985).
  - Franzwa, Gregory M., The Story of Old Ste. Genevieve (St. Louis: The Patrice Press, 1967).
  - Peterson, Charles E., "Early Ste. Genevieve and its Architecture," The Missouri Historical Review, XXXV:2 (January 1941), pp. 207-232.
  - Porterfield, Neil H. "Ste. Genevieve, Missouri," in John Francis McDermott, editor, Frenchmen and French

Ways in the Mississippi Valley (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1969), pp. 141-177.

Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration, Missouri, A Guide to the "Show Me" State (Missouri State Highway Department, 1941).

#### PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) team of the Rocky Mountain Regional Office, National Park Service, under the direction of Historical Architect Thomas G. Keohan. Documentation was carried out during the summer of 1985 at the HABS field office in Ste. Genevieve, Missouri, by project supervisor Osmund Overby (University of Missouri-Columbia), project architects James Q. Marsh (Hemet, California), William D. Cesaletti (Keaau, Hawaii), and Terance A. Gruenhagen (North Dakota State University), and project historian Claudia A. Barbero (University of Missouri-Columbia).

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